



## **Facilitating Large-Scale Water Recycling and Reuse Projects Act**

*Introduced by Reps. Susie Lee (NV-03), Grace Napolitano (CA-32), Raúl Grijalva (AZ-03), Jared Huffman (CA-02), and Greg Stanton (AZ-09)*

### **Why do we need this bill?**

Nevada and the West are experiencing a water crisis. Lake Mead is approximately 150 feet away from 25 million Americans losing access to the Colorado River, and the rate of decline is accelerating due to severe, ongoing drought. Large-scale water recycling is the type of innovation needed to tackle this crisis — but it will require sustained investment. The bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) provided \$8.3 billion under Title IX to the Bureau of Reclamation for Western Water Infrastructure. Included was the creation of a new, competitive Large-Scale Water Recycling Project Grant Program, with a direct spending commitment of \$450 million. Eligible projects must have a total estimated cost of \$500 million or more, with the federal cost share for a project not to exceed 25 percent.

An example of an eligible project is the partnership between the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) and the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) on a Regional Recycled Water Program (RRWP) that will utilize purified reclaimed water treated in Southern California — water that would otherwise be discharged to the Pacific Ocean — to expand potable drinking water supplies through safe, technologically advanced water treatment and delivery processes. For an investment of approximately 25 percent of the total cost of the project, or \$750 million, SNWA expects to receive around 25 percent of the water produced by the RRWP in the form of an exchange of water supply from the Colorado River.

Federal investment is critical to accelerating these types of game-changing large-scale water recycling projects to tackle our nation's drought crisis head-on. Large-scale water recycling will drive development of new Western water supplies, offer enhanced drought resiliency, create a more sustainable water portfolio, and provide additional flexibility to federal water managers. But compared to longstanding initiatives on flood control, storage, and other traditional water infrastructure projects, federal funding for large-scale water recycling projects has been modest — and more funding is and will be essential. The Southern California RRWP reflects that these projects can cost upwards of \$3 billion, and a federal cost-share program is vital to ensuring these proven, drought-fighting projects can become a reality.

### **What would this bill do?**

This legislation is rooted in three realities: Large-scale water recycling works, federal funding to support it is currently too low, and Congress cannot afford to delay further investment — and risk doing too little, too late — in the face of the ongoing, drought-driven water crisis in Nevada and throughout the West.

Specifically, this bill would:

- Authorize an additional \$700 million for the IIJA-created competitive grant program for large-scale water recycling and reuse projects, and
- Eliminate the IIJA's five-year sunset on this program to ensure long-term investment in large-scale water recycling solutions.

**For more information or to cosponsor or endorse this bill**, please contact Mark Coombs in Congresswoman Susie Lee's office at [mark.coombs@mail.house.gov](mailto:mark.coombs@mail.house.gov).